

# Buprenorphine

## ***What is it?***

Buprenorphine is a prescription drug that is used to treat dependence on heroin and other opiates. It blocks withdrawal and craving. It can be used for both detox and long term treatment.

Two types of buprenorphine are approved for use in the United States:

- **Subutex®** (buprenorphine hydrochloride), and
- **Suboxone®** (buprenorphine combined with naloxone).

**Subutex®** is usually given during the first few days of treatment. **Suboxone®** is used more in the maintenance phase. Both come in 2mg and 8mg tablets. The tablets are taken sub-lingually (under the tongue).

Buprenorphine is long-lasting. At normal doses, most people tolerate it well. But, like other opiates, you can become addicted to it. It's also possible to overdose on it.

### ***Some advantages***

- ➔ Doctors can treat patients with buprenorphine in the privacy of their offices – just like they do for other chronic illnesses like diabetes and high blood pressure.
- ➔ Unlike heroin and methadone, withdrawal from buprenorphine is mild to moderate. It can often be managed without the use of other drugs.

## ***How can I get it?***

At this time, you can't get buprenorphine in drug treatment centers or methadone clinics. You need a prescription from a doctor. But not all doctors can prescribe it. They must complete a special training. A trained doctor can help you decide if buprenorphine is a good choice for you.

The back of this flyer lists doctors who can prescribe buprenorphine in Washington State. By law, doctors and group practices can only treat 30 patients at one time. So, some of the doctors listed may not be taking new patients at this time.

Buprenorphine may not be a good treatment for everybody. If you are taking depressant drugs (like benzos, sleeping pills or alcohol), buprenorphine can make it harder for you to breathe. Also, if you already have problems with your lungs, kidneys or liver, buprenorphine can have harmful side effects. So, if you want to get on buprenorphine, make sure you talk to your doctor honestly about your health status and any other drugs (legal and illegal) you are taking.

### ***CAUTION!***

- ☉ If you try to crush **Suboxone®** and shoot it up, the naloxone will kick in and put you into withdrawal. The naloxone won't affect you if you let the tablet dissolve under your tongue.
- ☉ If you get buprenorphine on the street, make sure you are starting to go into withdrawal before you take it. If you don't, the buprenorphine could kick you into full-blown withdrawal.
- ☉ Using benzos and buprenorphine together can cause overdose.

## ***How do I pay for it?***

Buprenorphine is a new drug. It is not yet covered by Medicaid or most private insurance. There is also no public funding at this time. So, you need to pay for it on your own. Depending on your dose, it may cost \$350 or more per month.

## ***What if I am already on methadone?***

You can switch to buprenorphine. But, because the two drugs are very different, patients are not always satisfied with the results. If you think you might want to switch, start by talking to your counselor and the doctor at your methadone clinic. You will have to cut your methadone back to 30mg before you switch. You can switch back if it turns out that buprenorphine is not a good choice for you.

*You can find out more about buprenorphine on the internet: [buprenorphine.samhsa.gov](http://buprenorphine.samhsa.gov)  
Or, talk to your doctor.*

## **King County Providers**

Howard Berryman Edwards MD  
1800 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE Suite 104  
Bellevue, WA 98004  
(425) 637-1981

Thomas E. Horst MD  
2700 152<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE Emb/2n  
Redmond, WA 98052  
(425) 883-5151 x4366

Joseph A. Barrett MD  
325 Ninth Avenue Box 359935  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 731-4810

Sandra Jo Counts M.D.  
515 Minor Avenue # 220  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 622-9496

Sam W. Cullison M.D.  
550 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Suite 100  
Seattle, WA 98122  
(206) 320-2484

Thomas John Deal M.D.  
5343 Tallman Avenue NW # 203  
Seattle, WA 98107  
(206) 789-5555

Dr. Louis Paul Gianutsos  
550 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Suite 100  
Seattle, WA 98122  
(206) 320-2484

Dr. Charles Jacob Mayer  
Rainier Park Medical Clinic  
4400 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue S  
Seattle, WA 98118  
(206) 461-6957

Joseph A. Schuster MD  
1221 Madison Street Suite 901  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 682-0882

Dr. Joseph O. Merrill  
Harborview Medical Center  
325 Ninth Avenue Box 359780  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 341-4432

James M. Squire M.D.  
1221 Madison Street Suite 901  
Seattle, WA 98104  
(206) 682-0882

Ron Merchant MD  
Group Hlth-Eastside Hosp., 2N Detox Unit 2700  
152nd Avenue NE (in patient only)  
Redmond, WA 98052  
(425) 883-5151

Robert R. Younkin M.D.  
22010 F 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE  
Bothell, WA 98021  
(425) 488-4988

## **Other WA State Providers**

Lowell C. Allred M.D.  
508 West Division Avenue  
Ephrata, WA 98823  
(509) 754-3563

Ronald Schubert M.D.  
5702 N 26<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tacoma, WA 98407  
(253) 403-7100

Thomas M. Tocher M.D.  
1410 Broadway  
Everett, WA 98201  
(425) 258-1830

R. Bruce Worth M.D.  
1020 Anderson Drive, # 203  
Aberdeen, WA 98520  
(360) 533-6063

Gary Schillhammer M.D.  
1190 Riddle Street Box 309  
Darrington, WA 98241  
(360) 436-1055

William E. Dickinson D.O.  
Providence Behavioral Health Svcs 916 Pacific  
Everett, WA 98201  
(425) 258-7390

Dr. David Lee Curnel  
840 E. Hill  
Moses Lake, WA 98837  
(509) 764-6400

Joy Ruiz-Molleston M.D.  
3716 Pacific Avenue  
Tacoma, WA 98408  
(253) 474-5141

T. Kent Vye D.O.  
310 Holton Avenue  
Yakima, WA 98902  
(509) 452-2508

Alternative Formats Available

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